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CONTEMPLATION VERSUS REASON¹ AN INQUIRY INTO HUMAN KNOWLEDGE IN THE LIGHT OF THEORY OF VALUES

What is Contemplation? What is Reason?

Will the answers to these questions allow one to compare and distinguish them on a common level? If this comparison and this distinction succeed and are to lead us to a better understanding of human knowledge, how do we have to conceive of that human knowledge itself? And, finally, if this is to be done in the light of a theory of values, what are values, and which values are there?

These are questions apparently of such a diversity, that one might be afraid of what is to come out of their discussion: A whole book?

Well, it might fill a whole book. But my task is to summarise the book in less than an hour. By the way, the questions just put are not so disparate as might be thought; it will be one of the purposes of the lecture to show precisely that knowledge and values, and contemplation and reason are connected and make very good sense when rightly put together.

Let me begin by reminding you of St Thomas's definition of knowledge—which is still the best we have—as the *adaequatio intellectus et rei*, which implies that knowledge is more an act than a fact; for it is not that which is presently written and could be stored in some gigantic textbook from which bits could be read for such and such purposes, but is, rather, the very enterprise itself which establishes and multiplies the links between our own (spiritual) self and the being of things sometimes called reality.

How does it come about that man feels the need to know? I believe that the answer to that question is best given when we recognise that metaphysically speaking man is, at the origin of his existence, so isolated that he has a strong feeling of solitude which becomes more and more intolerable if he does not try by every means to re-establish precisely one or more links with all these things and beings from which he finds himself isolated. By doing this, a difference arises between him and everything else: He acts as a *subject*; everything else appears as *his object*, or *objects*.

Man as a subject can assume different attitudes towards his object. Before establishing a distinction among them, however, we should notice that the original solitude followed by the consciousness of the intolerable situation it implies, resumes itself in the fact that man becomes aware of the limitation

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and finitude of his own self as well as of the finiteness of the multiple things around him, from which a kind of very first question arises in his mind: is every thing, i.e. I *and* every thing else—in other words the totality of what is—finite, or is that feeling of solitude possible only because the finiteness of things detaches itself like a relief against a background which is itself boundless and infinite?

Man's solitude is first of all the irreducible character of his situation as a human being. He feels it as part of his self of which he cannot rid himself materially speaking because it is not made of matter; but at the same time, this is precisely what endowes him with the consciousness of the fact that not only he himself, but also that from which he is isolated are, at least, made of matter. It is sometimes explained by saying that his soul is imprisoned in his body, but I shall not follow this up, for it introduces the notions of soul and body which I should rather prefer to avoid—though I do not deny their meaningfulness.

The consciousness of the finiteness of things shapes itself more and more into the feeling that matter could not appear such as it does if it did not change, and that vice versa, change would not be noticeable if matter did not exist. Consequently, *matter* and *time* are the two exterior aspects of the consciousness which man has of his original solitude. How they are to be distinguished is a problem in itself, which I shall not discuss. What is of importance here is that they constitute the grounds on which that consciousness becomes the notion of a finitude or limitation imposed upon man's self and of a finiteness in everything he attempts to grasp with the senses. But at the same time, if there is such a thing as finitude, there should also be, at least the possibility of, the infinite.

No one has ever been able to prove or to disprove, either that there is no such thing as the infinite or that there is. The very idea of the infinite does not prove its being; if it did, we should have to believe in the ontological argument. But what is perhaps more important in that respect is that people experience the infinite—be they scientists or plain labourers, artists or officers of the state, etc.—and sometimes very strongly indeed. That experience is a fact, and facts cannot be discarded.

Their experience is such, that they feel enhanced and filled with an authentic joy in the possession of what becomes so valuable to them that we should not hesitate to call it a *cardinal value*. This value appears to be both material and immaterial at the same time—like all authentic values by the way—material because its roots reach with certainty into reality, and immaterial because we cannot grasp it, e.g. with our fingers like a coin having the conventional value of, say, one shilling, for it has no limits whatsoever; we cannot even grasp it by any of the senses, because the quintessence of the physical senses is the sense of temporality, whereas the said value is a-temporal.

Or, should we rather say that its 'grasp' succeeds somehow, but that at the same time it amounts to 'suspending time' itself, replacing it by a timelessness more profound than eternity itself as spoken of by the theologians? However, the fact is that besides experiencing the infinity and oneness of reality, people also experience the presence of finite things around them, where the very word presence alludes to their being in time. All these beings and things around us, whether found by observation, or produced by our initiative and power of invention, or encountered by our volition and behaviour, can be grasped by an act of our physical senses which makes us *believe* that they are finite, thereby *showing* by an act of our understanding that they are in time. Hence in addition to the experience men have of the Infinite in Being, they also have an experience of finiteness of the various particular beings; and, more specifically, their finiteness is the same as their temporality and materiality, for it can be described and shaped by means of temporal terms and material qualities.

The consequence of this is that *two fundamental attitudes*—and only two at that very first level of action—are possible when a subject is to try to quit his original situation of solitude in order to establish a relation with reality: *either* one of greatest possible, yet cognitive, surrender within the totality of what there is, *or* one of search by every means to consciously realise things, keeping them distinct even if they are to be grouped or arranged and connected into orders—in other words: either, for man, to let himself be re-integrated into reality one and infinite, or to keep reality plural and limited in appearance and deal with it as such. If one remembers the original sense according to which attitude meant aptitude, he sees that the fundamental attitudes are the two abilities of the mind to adequately grasp reality.

These two attitudes are born from intentions irreducible to each other. They build two *modalities* of cognition, i.e. of knowledge, where the cognitive act is different in each case: we call it *contemplation* in one case, *judgment* in the other case.

Another distinction must be made here at once, because at this very deep level of consideration, the differences are slight and everything is still somehow confused. I mean that we should at this moment contrast contemplation not only with judgment, but also with what is called *reason*. Unfortunately, the word reason is ambiguous. There are for instance reasons for our action; in that sense, the modalities are the attitudes resulting from the application of two fundamental, possible, but distinct reasons. We might be reminded here of Pascal's celebrated phrase 'Le coeur a ses raisons que la raison ne connaît pas': Heart has its reasons, unknown to reason itself.

It is somehow unfortunate that, in the development of language, words, and in our case especially the word reason assume quite a few distinct, though related meanings. Meanwhile, we should not forget that there are 'reasons' for that.

First of all, we might distinguish between 'reason' as used only in the singular, and 'reason' as susceptible of being put in the plural. The plural, reasons, itself assumes two possible interpretations, meaning either intellectually conceived causes of human behaviour, or the specific ways reason as a singular manifests itself according to certain modes of intellection. As a mere singular, it means intellect itself, or eventually its exercise. In our days, a number of philosophers would restrict its use to designate the exercise of the faculty of logical thought. But certainly this is a very restricted and narrow use. It is not the sense in which I intend to use the word. Not only Pascal, but Descartes as well had a much broader conception of reason. And even if I am not inclined to follow Kant in the systematic treatment he gave of it, Kant used the word not just for what he called pure theoretical reason, but also for what he called practical reason; according to him, the latter was not of a logical nature, but of a moral one.

For this 'reason' I shall be careful not to rob the concept of reason of its comprehensive applicability. Coming back to the modalities of knowledge, and changing slightly our nomenclature, we might try to become also a little more specific by saying that there *are* judgments by reason, and there *is* judgement by contemplation. Judgments by reason are deliberately put in the plural, whereas judgment by contemplation stands in the singular. By doing so, however, we no longer oppose judgment and contemplation. On the contrary, we enlarge the concept of judgment and apply it to both modalities, whereas we distinguish the two modalities by opposing reason to contemplation. Yet here again, the distinction is awkward, because the question immediately arises: who judges in one case and in the other? There can be no doubt that in the first case, man as a subject performs the judgments, and if we say here judgments in the plural, this is because they are performed within the plurality of limited beings. In the other case, it is not man who is actually performing the judgment, quite the opposite, he is being judged himself, since his re-integration into the totality of being amounts to making of him an infinitesimal within the infinite being, and this admits only of one interpretation, viz. that being as a capital being is to be considered as judging man, man who is then a mere nothing, so-to-speak a subject-matter of no more relevance; the consequence of this is that man, still being the subject who quits his original solitude, can hardly avoid personifying somehow the performer of the judgement passed; he calls him God, or any similar name, or eventually refrains from giving him a name because of the unsurmountable difficulty of calling him anything; but at least the experience remains, since some immaterial substance has been grasped by man, who calls it the divine, the sublime, the ineffable or what have you, in any case a value of timeless and universal nature. If he abstains from personifying the performer, then he identifies the judgment passed upon himself with the bliss of some nirvana-like absorbance.

This is what happens in contemplation: the knowledge performed and achieved by grasping the ineffable, as if contemplation were the 'other reason' unknown to 'reason itself'. Hence contemplation is a first possible modality of knowledge.

Some philosophers think that such a modality cannot but be a fraud, because they believe they see a contradiction between the grasping and the ineffable. But they are mistaken, for their opinion rests upon a complete misunderstanding.

Ineffable is a word used in order to suggest that there is an immense difficulty in expressing 'by words' what is grasped, but it does not mean ungraspable. Moreover, since a grasp suggests a performance of finite measure, whereas the ineffable refers to the infinite, the two seem incommensurable. However, this does not mean that the grasp is an illusion. For, as we have just understood, actually the grasp is not performed by man, but by a Capital Being, certainly endowed with infinite powers. As an image, we might compare it with a child attempting to grasp its mother, when actually the mother is embracing it. This is exactly the reason why we should keep silent about it, for that grasp amounts to man being taken into the secret of Reality, into the *mystery of Being*: the ontological mystery as it is called by Gabriel Marcel—like the child being taken into the mother's womb. The way, the manner in which man is being thus integrated is therefore rightly called *mystic*. It is the particular *mode* of contemplation. For this reason, contemplation as we think of it is sometimes called *mystic contemplation*, assuming that there is a more common one which does not go further than some sort of uncompleted intention.

Not only from the analogy given of the child and the mother, but also from the authentic experience of integral re-union implied by the sexual act as it is described in the Bible when e.g. a patriarch is said 'to have known such and such woman', one understands why the motivation of mystic contemplation is sometimes said to be of the nature of love and why the contemplation turns into adoration when the one and infinite being is identified with God. We shall not, however, dwell upon this matter now, but will come back a little later to a discussion of love as contrasted to knowledge.

We should not forget either the Greek word for contemplation, viz. *theoria*, or the Latin one as meaning a performance within the field of action of the templum, *templum* itself being the border of the *sacred space* where the Divinity dwells—as was originally traced by the augur with his stick on the ground, the *τεμένος* of the Greek, the same indeed as is meant to be realised by the inner walls of the Hindu temple even today.

Sacred does not necessarily imply the three-dimensional space of our vision, still less the two-dimensional space of the ground, though of course the enclosure of the temples defines a 2-dimensional space by erecting walls around an area on the earth. Of course, it also allows a sacred space to be

in a sense finite, viz. geometrically speaking be an area; spiritually speaking, this may be reasonably interpreted when the divinity to whom the temple is dedicated has itself finite attributions like being solely the God of fire, or the Goddess of fecundity, etc. But, then, the mightier the God, the bigger one might say his temple should be. At the limit then, where God is almighty, the boundary must be removed at an infinite distance, where the grasp of our understanding reaches just as far as what is on this side of it, say where it reaches the lintel or just under it, in other words and etymologically: grasps the *sublime*. Beyond that limit, it is lost. Actually, then, no limitations should be attributed to the divinity, who personifies precisely the Capital Being in which the self of the human subject may be lost and absorbed in mystic contemplation. Since this is the experience we have of the ineffable, this Being is infinite and one. But since man remains the subject of the mystic contemplation, he retains some kind of initiative, lest his very self become totally destroyed. This initiative cannot assume the form of any logical descriptive dialectical or other speech. It cannot be any speech at all, but must consist in an adoration or quasi-silent prayer like the 'AUM' of ancient wisdom in India: a salutation unto the Lord, Dattātreyā 'Aum śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ'.

Mythology, as well as much of religion, stems from trying to overcome the immense difficulty in understanding this infinite-ness and this one-ness by functioning within finite temples dedicated to divinities of finite attributions, in other words by keeping within the realm of finiteness, for it sounds safer, even if the divinities are still the judges and man is still the subject matter of their judgments. But this is bound, sooner or later, to become a failure, because the finiteness of the attributions robs reality of what is necessary to make it the only possible origin of the judgment aimed at in contemplation, and, therefore, that kind of mythological and religious activity turns into pseudo-science, pseudo-art and pseudo-morals, in short into superstition, i.e. a misplaced awe.

It is, therefore, understandable that to many, a preference for acting along the other modality of knowledge appears altogether more secure, because there man himself keeps judging instead of being judged. His initiative is then much more explicit and establishes him much more strongly as a subject. This, of course, makes his action much more anthropomorphic than mystic contemplation, for—contrarily to what has been falsely believed—mystic contemplation is the least anthropomorphic of all forms of knowledge. At the same time, however, it advantageously replaces the pseudo-character of mythology—we remember that the Greek *ψευδος* means a lie—by authentic science, art and morals. In that respect, to my mind, this replacement can be said to mark the difference between primitive and enlightened humanity. The question: is there then authentic religion? will be dealt with presently.

Still, for the same reason of greater apparent security, by the way, attempts have been made to grasp the infinity and one-ness of reality through the finite and plural appearances of being as well as through the invention of finite and plural means to approach them. Such means are always of either mathematical, aesthetical or ethical nature. It is indeed well known that mathematics can be defined as a dialectic of the infinite. However, we should keep in mind that mathematics qua mathematics does not grasp reality, for, as such it is only an intellectual tool or means for such a purpose; it is the tool needed for scientific research, but not the scientific research itself, unless science is a fraud and the only reality is in the Platonic ideas of which mathematics would be the reminiscence. Anyhow, since science tends to grasp reality by intellectual means which shall finally be of strict mathematical nature, science itself can be said to be an enterprise of grasping the infinity of reality through the finiteness of its appearances and by means which are themselves finite. In our days, however, the infinity is mostly ignored and science is considered as an enterprise of grasping finite being by finite means, and people come to naively believe more and more that there is no such thing as the infinite.

Art too, with its aesthetic power of tackling the infinite, can be envisaged as quite a similar enterprise of grasping reality up to its infinity by finite means and through its finite appearances. Therefore, art and science are very much alike, and their distinction is to be looked for not in their common nature as modes of knowledge, but in further differences of these modes. The same will apply to morals.

Meanwhile, we notice that all such modes are complementary to the modality of contemplation. They constitute the alternative attitude of the intellect and, consequently, the second possible modality. We shall call it the *modality of judgment*, because in all such cases, judgments are performed by man as a subject.

If the word *reason* is substituted for *judgment*, then this modality may be called the rational one, and the former one the irrational instead of the contemplative one, using the Latin form *ratio* for reason, for in no case would I agree to use the word unreasonable which, in common language, unambiguously refers to what should not be attempted. In that sense of irrationality, we have to deal with a perfectly legitimate and authentic enterprise of the human mind. Irrationality in that sense is no pseudo-attitude whatsoever, but the very attitude of a mind striving at the only authentic, yet immediate re-union with reality one and infinite. According to the Oxford dictionary, irrational may be taken as meaning 'not commensurable with the natural numbers'; if we extend this sense, irrational in our case will mean: that of which the measure is the infinity and oneness we have been talking of the whole time, i.e. which is irreducible to plurality and divisibility.

That kind of irrationality is, after all, not the opposite, but another aspect of the rational, or of reason, namely non-reason, which 'reason itself' ignores. And now, we understand that in this phrase 'reason itself' means the more common and facile reason by judgment performed by the subject.

A moment ago, this facile reason was said to be the more anthropomorphic kind of reason, whereas contemplation is the less anthropomorphic. The choice of the adjective anthropomorphic is perhaps a little misleading, because the form or appearance of the judgments need not resemble man. I mean: these judgments are not made in the image of man. Much rather, they are made with the measure of man, which is finitude. Yet this does not signify that I object to the exercise of this facile reason. Quite the contrary, it should be practised by all means, as long as it is done by authentic means and without confusion. After all, it is that kind of profession I learnt and have practiced in its very paragon for so many years, viz. that of a theoretical physicist.

My contention is, that those who reject mystic contemplation as an illusion are themselves the victims of the greater illusion.

The modality of contemplation is simple, for its mode is always the mystical mode.

The modality of judgment—I stick to that designation in preference to the other one—is complex because it divides into several modes. I want here to explain shortly what they are, in order to make myself clear in the conclusion and to complete the description I have undertaken of the process of knowledge.

Let me recall first that the meaning of the phrase 'modality of judgment' has gone through an evolution in the historical course of philosophy, especially from Aristotle to, say, Léon Brunschvicg in the first half of the twentieth century. In the Aristotelian tradition, it referred to the structures of logical inferences only. I shall not follow this tradition, for it is much too restricted to allow for a comprehensive understanding of the implication.

Much rather, it is my intention to use the word modality in its full significance of a propensity to go by various distinct modes and manners of a common fundamental nature. We shall see presently that there are three and only three fundamental modes of judgment, whereas there was only one mode in the modality of contemplation, viz. the mystic mode. Therefore, their common attitude is rightly called the modality of judgment. But judgment is by no means restricted to utterances expressed by words; moreover, its three modes will not be concerned with the traditional categories called the necessary, the real and the possible, which are not modes of judgment but categories as implied by the verb 'to be'. I am not interested in these categories. I am interested in the specific manners in which a subject can approach its object in a cognitive intention. In a way, as will

perhaps be understood by now, I am more interested in philosophy as an engagement than in philosophy as an analysis; analysis is to my mind pretty much of an obsolete occupation.

At the basis of this philosophy as an engagement, we must recall that a subject and its object are qua subject and object inevitably in time. We have already explained that the temporal and the material are the two aspects of the same reality, sometimes called concrete reality, which is pleonastic. Hence, immaterial concepts, i.e. abstract entities cannot be real objects. For example, none of the mathematical entities are such objects or beings. They are at most beings of reason or of fiction, but not of facts. This is a good, old distinction. At the same time it may lead to a confusion, and this confusion is actually made by many contemporary logicians who believe they talk ontology where there is no reality covered by the abstract entities they use. Already Spinoza refused to accept the *ens fictum* and the *ens rationis*; I agree with Spinoza, these are unhappy confusions and there is actually too little difference between the fictitious and the reasonable, since one can make very good sense by fiction and even reason about it.

This may be surprising for an English-speaking audience which is far more faithful to scholastic rules than continental thought which went through so many revolutionary convulsions. But the precision is necessary if one is to understand the following.

We know that judgment results from the attitude assumed by a subject establishing of its own initiative adequate relations between itself and the objects of its intellection. Such relations can be established along one of three modes. Each of these modes is characterised by the particular form of the relation between the subject and the object. In two of these modes either the subject, or the object has a predominance over the other. In the third one, neither of them has a predominance, much rather both have an equal weight in their intercourse even if the subject keeps being the subject, i.e. the one who acts and performs the judgment.

Consider first the case where the *subject predominates*. It would of course be suggestive to call it the subjective mode. Actually, modern usage—contrary to medieval tradition—calls it *objective* and applies the word *objectivity* or *objectiveness* to characterise it. This may be unfortunate, especially in view of what we had to say about the kind of anthropomorphism it implies since it is the mode according to which everything is apprehended by means of a human measure. But since we cannot just discard a usage which has become more or less universal among the occidental languages, I shall adopt it. Moreover it also makes good sense since we can say that, according to it, the greatest attention is given to the object by means of a skill or mastership the subject exercises over the object. It implies that the subject keeps the greatest possible independence with regard to its object by so-to-speak, throwing the latter—the ‘ob-ject’—on to a plane where it can by both

concrete manipulation and abstract thinking be cut into pieces, i.e. analysed and scrutinised with the purpose of finding the orders of its constitution, called its *structure*, and the rules of its behaviour, called its *dynamics*. The structures and the dynamics of things reflect in their totality the image obtained in our understanding of what is commonly called *Nature*; the specific orders and rules found are called generically the *laws of Nature*; and the ultimate phase of this whole objective procedure leads to the elaboration of so-called *theories*; they are syntheses on the intellectual or abstract level of what has been extracted from concrete reality. Eventually, the attempt is made to reproduce the latter, i.e. the concrete, from the abstract description obtained, as objects in which the same structures materialise and the same dynamics work; such reproductions are also—in the sense given by chemistry—called syntheses.

This short description of the objective procedure will suffice to make it clear that we have here to deal with the *sciences*. It also makes clear that science always allows one to extract from the concrete what is finally laid down abstractly, even if along its complex elaboration one never can exactly say how much theoretical thought preceded or followed the experimental manipulations. Thus science leads in principle from the concreteness of plural and finite reality to its abstract comprehension or understanding, and I should like to insist upon the fact that I use the word science exclusively for those enterprises which start by positing objects of concrete nature; i.e. sciences are all concerned with reality, material and temporal. Sometimes these sciences are called the positive sciences. But the adjective positive is superfluous, and when I make the present point emphatically, it is because many people use the word science for activities of another kind, especially for certain techniques which are not in my sense sciences, because they do not discover any truth about any reality—I am thinking here of logics and mathematics—or for certain procedures of collecting and ordering mere facts as is typical of all that is done in history. My contention is indeed that neither mathematics (including logics) nor history are sciences. Mathematics does not bring forth any knowledge about anything (any real thing); much rather it allows one to perform the procedures of science in a completely satisfactory manner; therefore, it is a power, in Latin a *potentia*, not a *scientia*, not a science. Consequently, too, it does not disclose the truth; only the (positive) sciences do. It makes no sense to speak about the truth of mathematical propositions, since they do not in themselves contain the value called truth; they are not true, but they are correct, or right. Right and true are quite different categories: right is operative, true is ‘valuative’. Mathematics can be made into a robot, a computer; science cannot, because the computer can only compute correctly, but never tell by itself the truth about matter and life and the other temporal determinations of reality. Truth is a value which has to be discovered objectively, i.e. scientifically. I shall by the

way abstain from using the word truth in any other sense than the scientific, objective one.

If, on the one hand, the propositions of mathematics are never true, on the other hand historical facts are not so either. It does not make any sense to say for example: 'it is true that King Edward III died on such and such a day'. Historical facts are facts. All facts are facts, whether natural products or artifacts. Factuality is the ground level at which the objective enterprise starts. Of course one could say 'it is a historical fact that King Edward . . .'. But it would be much simpler and also much clearer to drop the little phrase and just say: 'King Edward died . . .'. Historical facts are particulars; mathematical propositions are universals. As is clearly seen from the paradigm of all sciences, viz. physics, science abstracts universals from the particulars. These universals are then no longer mere mathematical propositions, for in addition to their universal validity, they imply the real; this is what makes them the expression of *truths about reality*, which can be verified (or falsified), i.e. made more true or more untrue by looking at more facts. A fact is itself never true, but it has the virtue that it can verify, i.e. make true the true. Of course, a mathematical proposition is never verified (or falsified) by any fact; therefore, it is not a truth, but an operative device.

This completes the discussion of the first mode called science: the objective mode where the subject predominates over the object.

In the second mode, it is the object which predominates, whereas the subject submits itself to it to the highest possible degree. It proceeds, one might say, in a direction opposite to that followed by science, for, instead of extracting universals from the particulars, it produces particulars from universal conceptions. It is *art*. Its power of conception is called *aesthetics*; its products, i.e. the facts of art are to be found in the particulars it produces: artifacts if you will, which in art are called *works of art*. The generic ways to produce them are called styles. They promote beauty as a value, whereas the sciences disclose truth as a value. This mode is subjective because according to it, the subject submits itself to the predominance of its object which it creates as an object in matter and time as a reality after having conceived it as possible. So art, as a whole, is the form taken by knowledge when it goes from abstract conception to concrete realisation. But of course, here too, the actual procedure is much more complex and it is most difficult to say how much realisation follows or precedes the conception at each step of the elaboration, for instance at each blow of the hammer on the chisel of the sculptor.

In the third judicial mode, neither the subject, nor the object predominates: they stand on equal footing although the subject retains the initiative of the judgment. This situation implies the adequation to the *community* constituted by the subject and the object. Hence the mode is neither subjective, nor objective. It is communitative, an adjective created from

the word community. Furthermore, it is neither intersubjective, because it is not an intercourse between subjects, nor interobjective, because it is not an intercourse between objects. An assembly of beings like subjects or objects builds a *society*; looked upon as object, they become the object of a science, viz. sociology. If they are all acting humanly as subjects, in intercourse with one another, they can look upon nothing, their intercourse is intersubjective; intersubjectiveness remains necessarily within the act of giving, materially and spiritually; subjects are then persons, which does not mean that the intercourse collapses into nothing; on the contrary, it must evolve into the domain of love, although not the love of God but love between persons. This is a very peculiar form of knowledge, which somehow resembles contemplation in a way similar to the way in which the New Testament says of the second commandment that it resembles the first. But it is not the third mode within the judicial modality, for love between persons is not a judgment; it is neither a judgment performed by the subject, nor one performed by Reality one and infinite. It is the suspension of all such judgment; it dissolves temporality into the purely material aspect of reality; it is a way to efface completely the limitations of plural and finite beings. Hence, to love, is to be matter in timelessness. Love thus conceived is not the third judicial mode.

The latter is *morals*, its abstract power is *ethics*, the value it discloses is the good. It neither moves from the concrete to the abstract nor from the abstract to the concrete; it continuously pulls the abstract and the concrete together in a behaviour of the subject towards the object called (good) manners which is nothing but a constant synthesis of judgments in both the concrete and the abstract.

Fundamentally, objective, subjective and communitative procedures are judgments of finite measure upon finite situations performed by finite means. The approach of infinity and of one-ness is only rendered possible by the fact that mathematics, aesthetics and ethics could in spite of this fact be developed into powers of unificatory, all-embracing and limitless operativeness.

Returning to the question of religion now, we may first notice that there is a way of grasping by finite and plural means the infinity and oneness of reality without doing so—as in the sciences, the arts and morals—through its finite and plural appearances, but rather by attempting an immediate embrace without avoiding the ontological difficulty it implies, by keeping on the side of the judicial modality. This is perfectly legitimate though quite difficult and even risky, because of the disproportion between the means and the aim. Is it religion? No, not really, but it is very near it. It is the kind of activity encountered in *methaphysics* along the objective mode, then in *poetry*, according to the subjective mode, or it can be given the touch typical of morals, and then, as can be shown, it is *personal morals* because on the one hand morals is the knowledge of good behaviour, in the interaction of a

subject and his object, and on the other hand the good behaviour of a subject towards himself, that is personal morals which cannot be known without looking at a picture of oneself in a mirror—and there is no other mirror than the supreme being, one and infinite, into which the person can project that picture. It is then easy to understand that metaphysics deals fundamentally with Reality itself, poetry tends to identify love, and personal morals ends in ascetism.

But if this far-reaching enterprise of objective, subjective and personal nature is not yet religion, what is religion? The answer to this is that *religion* attempts a *confrontation* of the *threefold picture of Reality thus obtained* by modes of judgement and *the Reality contemplated* by mystics. This explains why religions claim to do so many things at a time: tell the truth, prove the beauty of the creation, give commandments, and invoke God by His sole name. However, there are two risks: one arises when a religion believes itself authorised to dictate what is truth, beauty, the good and the sublime, the other consists in making not only the particular enterprises of the intellect, but also their quintessence, viz. philosophy itself, ancillary to religion. These two mistakes have been perpetrated by most of the religions which give a high place to dogmas, such as Christianity, whereas authentic religious leaders seem to be conscious of the dangers. It does not seem to me that Jesus ever became a victim of any of these risks; he was much too witty for that; in all the senses of the word which, after all, has the same antique root as wisdom like the name of the ancient Vedas.

Thus, religion is not the most comprehensive knowledge. It is even doubtful whether it is knowledge. Rather, it is, or should be, a form of critique, since it is a confrontation of the modalities which should help to discard that which does not resist the confrontation and keep that which remains.

It is therefore an activity directed towards the future and not a kind of depository of past wisdom. In any case, God is not to be found in the past, nothing can be found in the past, for the past is past; everything will be found in the future, and become past; hence time is not—as physicists and others wrongly believe—running from the past towards the future, but from the future into the past. The only man I can quote who seems to have understood this clearly about time was Pascal. When I say: everything will be found in the future, *and become past*, I must however be careful about one distinction, the distinction between the plurality of beings and the one-ness of infinite Reality; for only the plural beings disappear into the past, whereas Reality remains one and infinite. Therefore God does not pass away; He is, purely and simply. Men can forget about Him, when they are interested in things alone.

The last thing I should like to say now is this: Can religion make man totally happy? I do not think so, because it is not comprehensive knowledge

and therefore not total freedom. If religion at one particular time had achieved a satisfactory confrontation, it should have seemingly rendered people happy, unless they felt that it had not completely brought them out of their state of original solitude. Indeed, man, even at the most advanced stage of his cognitive enterprise, still feels that there is more to strive for, and therefore he searches for more and creates more and undertakes more and more without end. If reality were finite, there would be an end to this; does any one believe that there will ever be an end? Most people doubt it, except perhaps the orthodox Marxists, whoever they may be? This general doubt amounts to a kind of proof of the infinity of Reality, not an ontological one, but as good a proof as can be wanted.

But at the same time it shows that there is a challenge, and the challenge is more than the dogmas of any accepted religion. Hence religion is not the α and the ω . God may be the α and the ω , but that is something quite different. This is not a religious teaching, it is a philosophical argument. Philosophy encompasses everything else. This conclusion explains why modern times have changed the original Christian nature of our culture into one which includes the Christian component but cannot be supported by it alone.